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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/812,381	03/29/2004	Jeffrey Stearns	5490E-000393	2594
27572 7590 03/07/2007 HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C. P.O. BOX 828 BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303			EXAMINER	
			JACKSON, BRANDON LEE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3772	

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/07/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/812,381	STEARNS ET AL.	
	Examiner Brandon Jackson	Art Unit 3772	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 March 2004.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 05 November 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner. Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>03/29/2004</u>	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-11 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent 4,777,946). Watanabe discloses a brace (1) comprising a band (3) with an oval shaped opening (5) that circumferentially fits around a joint, a pressure ring (2) attached to the opening (5) to exert controlled pressure (col. 3, lines 60-62). With respect to claim 2, the recitation of the ring stabilizing the ECU tendon with the pressure ring is an intended use and does not affect the patentability of a device. The Watanabe device (1) is able or capable to be used on the wrist because it is merely a strap and ring to be wrapped circumferentially. The band (3) is adjustable to provide pressure (col. 3, lines 60-62). The strap (3) is securable with hook and loop fasteners (6). The band includes D-ring slot (11) for receiving (fig. 3) the band (3). An insert (4) defines the D-ring (11) and reinforces (fig. 2) the opening (5). The pressure ring (2) is a deformable (col. 2, lines 65-66) silicone elastomer (col. 3, lines 16-17). The pressure ring (2) has an oval shape (fig. 2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent 4,777,946) in view of Marx (U.S. patent 4,048,991). Watanabe substantially discloses the claimed invention, see claim 1 rejection above. Watanabe fails to disclose a band including padding. However, Marx teaches a wrist wrap (fig. 1) with a foam (col. 3, lines 4-6) padding (12). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Watanabe device with padding, as taught by Marx, in order to provide the user with more comfort and to absorb sweat when the device is used during physical activity.

Claims 14-18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (U.S. Patent 4,777,946). Watanabe discloses all the elements of the

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ulnar brace; therefore the method steps would be obvious to one of ordinary skill because they would have resulted from the use of the Watanabe device.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Gauvry (U.S. Patent 5,417,646), Brossard (U.S. Patents 5,667,484; 5,769,803), Darcey (U.S. Patent 6,478,760), Weaver et al. (U.S. Patent 6,755,800).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brandon Jackson whose telephone number is (571)272-3414. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patricia Bianco can be reached on (571)272-4940. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Brandon Jackson
Examiner
Art Unit 3772

BLJ

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PATRICIA BIANCO
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700

3/5/07